



NEWS RELEASE

City of Yuma Police Department

For Immediate Release

Date: Tuesday, January 21, 2014

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NEW K-9 TO RECEIVE PROTECTIVE VEST

The Yuma Police Department has been selected to receive a vest for our recently announced new Police Service Dog, Raico. Raico was selected by the Protect Police K-9's Organization from Tucson to receive a free of charge protective vest. The Protect Police K-9's Organization was started by Michael Valdez when he was a third grade student in Tucson. Michael read a Scholastic magazine article which described law enforcement dogs in Los Angeles who were provided with a protective vest to wear as their uniform.

Michael solicited assistance from his parents who approached the Tucson Police Department about the need for K-9 protective vests and the potential costs associated with them. That action taken by Michael and his family was started fourteen years ago with the Tucson Police Department being the first department to get K-9 vests through this program. To date, 192 vests have been provided and approximately \$200,000 dollars raised for the purchases.

Michael's father, Gil Valdez is currently assisting with the Protect Police K-9's Organization and the vests are provided by the International Armor Company. Mr. Valdez researched organizations within the state that could benefit from this program and informed the department that the Protect Police K-9's Organization selected K-9 Raico to be one of the recipients of the protective vests.

Chief Lekan said, "We are honored to have been selected to receive a protective vest for Raico. Mr. Michael Valdez, Protect Police K-9's Organization and the support of our community is something our department does not take for granted. The Yuma Police Department and the K-9 Unit appreciates this generous offer to further protect our police canines on patrol. They understand how dangerous the job can be for our canines and their partners as they strive to keep this community safe. Thank you."

Mr. Valdez will officially present Raico his vest on Friday, January 24th at 10:30 a.m. at the Yuma Police Department. The media is welcome to attend the presentation of the vest.